DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 063 900 24 HE 003 219

AUTHOR Nehnevajsa, Jiri
TITLE University-Urban Interface Program Pittsburgh Goals: Notes on the Criminal Justice System.
INSTITUTION Pittsburgh Univ., Pa. University Urban Interface Program.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Bureau of Research.
BUREAU NO BR-8-0725
PUB DATE 18 Nov 71
GRANT OEG-2-9-480725-1027
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Community-University Forum on Criminal Justice, University of Pittsburgh, November 18, 1971

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *City Problems; *Higher Education; Law Enforcement; *Legal Problems; *Social Problems; *Urban Universities

ABSTRACT

One of the projects selected for the University Urban Interface Program at the University of Pittsburgh was that of studying and implementing some long-range goals for the city of Pittsburgh. Of the goals set up, reforms in the criminal justice system are seen as very desirable. Indeed, leaders in government and law in the black community programs give this issue the highest rating from among the 28 changes studied. Major suggestions for such reform include: (1) a complete overhaul of the bail system; (2) an adequate public defender system; (3) reorganization of the courts; (4) elimination of the backlog of cases; (5) rehabilitative rather than punitive justice; and (6) standardization of penalities and sentences for similar crimes and offenses. Some of the community leaders emphasize the need for better provisions in the whole system of administration of justice for the poorer and less educated citizens. Although reforms in the criminal justice system are 1 of the 2 most desired changes and 1 of the 5 most important issues in the community, the reforms are not expected to come about. (HS)

BR 80725 OAE
PA 24 HE

ED 063900

PITTSBURGH GOALS: NOTES ON THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

UNIVERSITY URBAN INTERFACE PROGRAM

CONTRACT NO. OEG-2-9-480725-1027
PROJECT NO. 80725

SUBMITTED TO THE
BUREAU OF RESEARCH U.S.O.E.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

NOVEMBER 18, 1971

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

HE003219

UNIVERSITY-URBAN INTERFACE PROGRAM

PITTSBURGH GOALS: NOTES ON THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

NOVEMBER 18, 1971

by

Jiri Nehnevajsa

This paper was prepared for presentation at the November 18, 1971, University of Pittsburgh Community-University Forum on Criminal Justice.

Albert C. Van Dusen, Ph.D.
Secretary of the University
(Vice Chancellor)
Principal Investigator

Robert C. Brictson, Ph.D.
Director of Research Programs

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In view of the fact that you have all received a copy of the first and initial summary of the Goals Study, it seems unnecessary to have to repeat these results at this time. I have also been privileged to participate in a previous Community-University Forum, at which time I had the opportunity to highlight some additional findings.

With your permission,I will point to the main issues of the Pittsburgh Goals Study Summary and to those subsequently considered, and then spend the time available to me to consider the specific, yet rather general, problem of the day, that is, the problem of reforms in the criminal justice system.

The 106 community leaders whose cooperation we so greatly appreciated in the Spring 1971 study display a great deal of concern with, and interest in, the future of our community.

They are receptive to changes in that they, invariably, favor innovations and changes both of a technological and social, institutional, variety.

They also agree on the major community goals, or if you wish to put it more modestly, on the major issues which call for immediate attention on the part of the community. Thus there is evidence of great interest in the development of the community, great willingness to entertain innovative ideas though not necessarily accept particular ones, and great agreement on the kinds of things that need doing, even though also a good deal of difference on the ways by which some of these desired and important things are to be accomplished.

The central issues, as we identify them on the basis of the responses

of these community leaders, include such things as

- the need for new advances in pollution control technology
- the need for new anti-pollution, or environment control, laws or the improved enforcement of existing ones
- the need for a Rapid Transit System, that is, the adoption of a Rapid Transit System plan and its immediate implementation with the hope that it can be a system sufficiently flexible to permit expansion and to permit adoption of new technologies
- the need for reforms in the public welfare system
- the need for new approaches in the area of drug use
- the need for new types of efforts in the area of low-cost housing, including housing for the aged.

I am selecting only a few issues to cite as among the prominent ones, and these problems emerge in the key group of concerns from among the 28 which we explicitly studied.

The research has also identified three fundamental impediments to furthering community development.

One, the leaders - themselves involved in the political order of our society and community in positions of power - are rather disenchanted with "politics as usual", specifically, with politicians as politicians, with the existing political parties, both Democratic and Republican, and generally, with the ways in which we seem to arrive at collective decisions through the existing political order.

Second, the leaders are somewhat pessimistic, an attitude clearly connected with their low assessment of politics, as to how <u>much</u> can be actually achieved. Typical examples of this are such items as the consensus on the desirability of metropolitanism in the Pittsburgh area

and throughout the county, coupled with an expectation that this simply will not happen in the coming five years, and little progress of any kind will be made. It is illustrated by an agreement on the desirability and importance of inducing new industry and business coming into the community and into the area, also linked to an expectation that it will not happen anyway, and that Pittsburgh might continue stagnating, or will even deteriorate further due to outmigration both of industry and people.

The third point which amounts to a major impediment has to do with a feeling that personalized leadership of the inspirational or catalytic variety is lacking in the community, and that we are sorely missing personalities of the Richard King Mellon type.

Before I proceed to discuss the problem of criminal justice as it has been articulated in the study by the community leaders themselves, let me only mention why these factors which I cite as major impediments are both as source of puzzlement and concern to this researcher.

If community leaders do not feel that they are in a position to help to reform the political system, specifically the parties and the predilections of politicians, we are in trouble indeed.

If community leaders, by definition individuals in positions of power and influence, do not expect that much in the way of betterment in the quality of life in our community is likely to come about, who should maintain an optimistic stance?

If community leaders regret the absence of personalized leadership complementary to the electoral system's production of leaders, where is such leadership going to emerge from and under what circumstances?

In this general context, let me now outline a few salient points

which bear on the central theme of today's discussion.

In this phase of the Pittsburgh Goals Study, our items were quite general in character. We wanted to know how desirable and likely, over a five year period, particular broadly gauged changes would be, and how important the issue was. We wanted to know how one might go about introducing some of the suggested changes, and what are the steps to avoid. One of these items dealt with "major changes in the administration of criminal justice."

Reforms in the criminal justice system are seen as very desirable. Indeed, leaders in Government and Law and in Black Community Programs give this issue the highest rating from among the 28 changes studied. In the case of Government and Law leaders, the need for changes in the criminal justice system ties for the highest desirability rating with the need for some kind of a Rapid Transit System, and among the Black leaders, it ties similarly with the need for firm legal controls over pollution.

It ranks among the top most desired changes for leaders of Religious Social Service Programs, Health and Welfare, and Housing and Urban Development.

While the desirability of reforms is high in all groups of leaders, relative to the other 27 questionnaire items, it is lower for leaders in Environmental Control and those involved in Anti-Poverty Programs.

Leaders in Government and Law, Religious Social Services, and Black Community Programs also assign very high importance to this issue. It ranks among the very top changes which are seen needed in Pittsburgh over the next several years. But if these three groups of community leaders rate the need for reforms in the criminal justice system among the most

EVALUATIONS OF THE NEED FOR "MAJOR CHANGES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM"

Groups of Leaders	Desirability		Likelihood		Importance	
	Average	Rank	Average	Rank	Average	Rank
All Community Leaders	+ 1.47	6	5.84	13	8.05	9
Government and Law	+ 1.80	1.5	6.27	7	8.60	2.5
Business and Banking	+ 1.15	12.5	5.46	20	7.58	10
Education	+ 1.27	11.5	5.18	20	7.45	14
Health and Welfare	+ 1.73	5	5.82	14.5	8.81	8
Housing and Urban Development	+ 1.43	5.5	5.28	9	6.43	19
Black Community Programs	+ 1.67	1.5	4.40	20	7.83	4.5
Anti-Poverty Programs	+ 1.00	17	5.82	15	7.60	15.5
Religious Social Services	+ 1.75	3	6.83	6.5	9.00	3
Environmental Control	+ 1.20	17.5	7.40	7	7.80	13
Mass Media	+ 1.50	8.5	5.40	20	7.80	8

a. Desirability values run from (-2.00) to (+2.00) as minimum and maximum respectively.
b. Likelihood values run from (0) to (10).
c. Importance values run from (0) to (10) reflecting increasing importance.
d. The "ranks"given here identify where the issue stands for each group of respondents relative to the 28 issues of the basic questionnaire. Thus "1" would mean that it is the "most" desired, likely, or important of the 28 issues. In turn, "28" would make it the "least" desired, likely, or important of the 28 issues.
Ranks like "5.5" mean simply that two (and perhaps more) items are "tied" for a position in the ranking order, and an average rank for all such tied items was assigned to each one of them.

desired and most important problems of the community, they differ in their assessments on how likely it is that the needed and desired reforms will come about. First of all, the likelihood index does not place the issue among the very top ones, the most probably ones, for any of the groups of leaders. But changes are considered fairly likely by leaders in Religious Social Services and Government and Law and, by the way, Environment Control Programs leadership. The Black Community Program leaders see such reforms as rather unlikely - as do, by the way, leaders in business and banking, education and the mass media.

But the central finding of considerable importance has to do precisely with the leaders of Black Community Programs. Let me repeat the point: reforms in the criminal justice system are one of the two most desired changes; one of the five most important issues in the community; and the reforms are not expected to come about.

This coupling of very high desirability with low likelihood is symptomatic of a high state of frustration, and in its behavioral consequences suggests either apathy borne out of a mixture of powerlessness and cynicism regarding the workings of the social order, or else, mobilization of effort to induce change. I suggest that the days are over when Blacks tended to respond to social problems impinging on their existence, with withdrawal. Thus I fully expect that the alternative, activist, strategy will make itself forcefully manifest unless the community at large can begin tackling the problem of criminal justice reforms before the already nearly filled cup of grievances overflows. Since all groups of community leaders are essentially in agreement that reforms are desirable and needed, this should not be an impossible task, and it is one which most profitably should be taken up without delay.

What are some of the things which the community leaders themselves are suggesting? Let me first quote verbatim from a leader in the judiciary system:

> "Complete overhaul of the prison system. Reduction of many offenses from felonies to misdemeanors and misdemeanors to summary offenses. Treatment of alcoholism as an illness rather than crime. Establishment of community treatment centers for adult and juvenile offenders. Limitations on "frivolous" appeals."

To further illustrate the thinking of some of these community leaders, I would like to cite suggestions from one of the leaders in Religious Social Service Programs:

> "Pennsylvania Penal Code should be revised. Maximum sentences on certain offenses should be lowered bringing the law in line with sentencing practices; bail bond maximum equal maximum fine allowed by law; elimination of summary proceedings; require magistrates to keep standardized records of proceedings and certain information on offenders; set guidelines for assessing fines; establishment of community services for the offender population - group therapy, medical diagnosis, family counselling, half-way houses, work-study release programs. Guidelines and standards should be set for appropriate treatment of offenders and services to be rendered by probation departments and for qualfications of personnel."

To sum up some of the other main suggestions, in part, of course, overlapping with the two statements already quoted, the leaders suggest:

1. a complete overhaul of the bail system
2. an adequate public defender system
3. reorganization of the courts
4. elimination of the backlog of cases
5. rehabilitative rather than punitive justice
6. standardization of penalties and sentences for similar crimes and offenses.

Some of the leaders emphasize the need for better provisions in the whole system of administration of justice for the poorer and less educated citizens in our midst. At least one of the community leaders favors a kind of socialized legal practice, but the main objective which is involved has to do with the costs of seeking justice, not to speak of obtaining it, which do not generally favor the poor and the less privileged.

My main point here is not to argue about the actual k nds of changes which may be needed. Rather, I would merely like to underscore that there exists an agreement on the need for reforms. Many and different ideas about the kinds of desirable measures come from a variety of circles within our community and it may just be that many of the invaluable ideas have not even begun to be systematically tapped. There exists, it seems, an overriding necessity to open up a dialogue out of which sound programs of reform may come, and the time to begin is now, or possibly yesterday.

The future is not something that just comes about. We are not victims of an implacable destiny nor simple beneficiaries of lady luck. Individually, and collectively, we are the makers of the future. And there certainly is no real reason why the future could not be made more to our liking than the present has been.